

Message Text

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16

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 OMB-01 AID-20 DRC-01 SAM-01

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R 111200Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2429

AMEMBASSY RABAT

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT ALGIERS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 900

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MR SS SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: THE MAURITANIAN POSITION

REF: RABAT 3156

1. SUMMARY: ACCORDING FORNMIN MOUKNASS, MAURITANIA HOLDS TO PREVIOUSLY STATED POSITION FAVORING PLEBICITE UNDER UN AUSPICES TO DECIDE FUTURE OF SPANISH SAHARA. MOUAKNASS REFUSED COMMENT ON NEW SPANISH PROPOSALS BECAUSE, HE SAID, HE HAS YET TO SEE THEM IN WRITING. HE HAS, HOWEVER, ALREADY CONFERRED WITH MOROCCAN AND ALGERIAN AMBASSADORS ON THIS SUBJECT AND WE EXPECT THAT OULD DADDAH AND BOUMEDIENNE WILL RENEW THEIR CLOSE COOPERATIVE DIALOGUE ON THE SAHARA ISSUE.

2. CALLED ON FORNMIN MOUKNASS JULY 10 AND RAISED, INTER ALIA, SUBJECT NEW SPANISH PROPOSALS FOR SPANISH SAHARA
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AUTONOMY. MOUKNASS READILY ADMITTED HE HAD CALLED IN BOTH

MOROCCAN AND ALGERIAN AMBASSADORS THIS WEEK TO DISCUSS NEW SPANISH MOVES. HE REPEATED GIRM'S LONG-HELD POSITION THAT SAHARA IS MAURITANIAN TERRITORY BUT ALSO REITERATED HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION THAT SAHARANS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DECIDE OWN FUTURE THROUGH PLEBICITE UNDER UN SPONSORSHIP. MOUKNASS DID NOT ADDRESS ISSUE OF FRANCHISE FOR PLEBICITE BUT DID SAY MAURITANIA WOULD RESPECT RESULTS OF VOTE.

3. THOUGH MINISTER SPOKE IN CALM, MEASURED TERMS ABOUT SAHARA'S FUTURE, HIS PERSONAL FEELINGS ARE UNDOUBTEDLY WARMER. MOUKNASS HIMSELF, LIKE MANY IMPORTANT MAURITANIANS, IS THE SON OF A SAHARAN FAMILY THAT STILL LIVES IN THE TERRITORY. NO MATTER WHAT COURSE SAHARAN POLITICS TAKE, MOUKNASS IS CONVINCED THAT TERRITORY WOULD HAVE CLOSEST RELATIONSHIP WITH MAURITANIA. AFTER ALL, MOUAKNASS SAID, THE SAHARANS ARE ALL KIN TO US (MAURITANIANS).

4. COMMENT: GIRM CHAMPIONING OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR SPANISH SAHARA IS REALISTIC POLICY FOR IMAGE CONSCIOUS THIRD WORLD COUNTRY INCAPABLE OF UNILATERALLY PRESSING ITS OWN CLAIM TO TERRITORY. FONMIN'S EASY MANNER, HOWEVER, BELIES SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH GIRM WOULD VIEW ANY CHANGE IN STATUS OF SPANISH SAHARA. IN FACT, GIRM MAY SECRETLY PREFER STATUS QUO. MAURITANIA HAS ALWAYS FEARED A COMMON BORDER WITH MOROCCO. IT ONLY IN 1970 THAT MOROCCO DROPPED ITS CLAIM TO MAURITANIA AND RECOGNIZED GIRM. SINCE THEN GIRM HAS DEVELOPED A "SPECIAL" RELATIONSHIP WITH ALGERIA PARTIALLY AS A HEDGE AGAINST ANY RENEWED MOROCCAN AMBITIONS IN MAURITANIA AND THE SAHARA (SEE NOUAKCHOTT A-18 FOR DETAILS). IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT IT WAS BOUMEDIENNE WHO SPOKE FOR BOTH HIMSELF AND A PASSIVE OULD DADDAH AT AGADIR LAST YEAR. (RABAT 3443 JULY 1973) AS IN PAST, IT DOUBTFUL GIRM WILL HAVE ANY PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW SPANISH POLICY UNTIL OULD DADDAH HAS HAD OPPORTUNITY CONFER WITH HIS BIG BROTHER IN ALGERIA. SHURTLEFF

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